1878

(For Private Circulation Only).

THE PARSEE PATELLS OF BOMBAY,

THEIR SERVICES

TO

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT,

BY

BOMANJEE BYRAMJEE PATELL.

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PREFACE.

THIS compilation from old Government and other Family Records claims no originality. Its imperfections would have been remedied if the compiler had the benefit of receiving detailed and authentic information from some aged member of the Patell Family. Its sole object is to preserve in a substantial form the memory of the Elders, who have so largely contributed to the establishment and reputation of the family. If this object is achieved the compiler will not have laboured in vain.

B. B. P.

Bombay, September 1876.

The Parsee Patells of Bombay,

THEIR SERVICES TO THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

Bombay appears to have become a Portuguese settlement in 1530 A. C. A solitary island on the western coast of India, inhabited chiefly by Cooly fishermen, and surrounded by salt batty fields, its harbour must have been the only object of attraction to the Western adventurers. For more than a century and a quarter it continued a Portuguese possession till in 1662 it was given as a dowry to Charles II. of England, on his marriage with the Infanta Catherine of Portugal.

Foremost amongst its Parsee settlers was one Dorabjee Nanabhoy, who, in about 1640, had removed with his family from the village of *Soomari* in the Surat district. A free but well-regulated intercourse with the residents of the island gained him a strict hold over them. The Portuguese authorities, ignorant of the language, customs, and manners of the people, were induced to avail themselves of Dorabjee's services as a happy medium of communication between the rulers and the ruled. As an additional recommendation he had a fair knowledge of Portuguese, which the occasional visits of the Portuguese merchants had enabled him to cultivate in Surat. He was accordingly en-

trusted with a certain share in the administration of the island, and his advice on various local matters often proved to be of great value.

He served the Portuguese Government for a pretty long time, during the course of which he gave them so much satisfaction that, in testimony of their appreciation of his services, a plot of land, in what is called the Cowasjee Patell Street, was made over to him. Again at the time the possession of Bombay was transferred to the English Government, he received as a present a snug little building, which, standing in the same state in which it was built more than 200 years ago, is a solitary old relic of the style of architecture, which seems to have been in favour at that time.

On the transfer of this Portuguese possession to the British Crown, DORABJEE's services seem to have been, on recommendation of the late Government, reckoned by the British authorities as part and parcel of the actual transfer of the island—a circumstance which strongly shows that they were alive to the conscientious and satisfactory performance of the onerous duties that devolved upon him. And thus from the early days when the British could call this little island their own, the Parsees were in a position to render them assistance, which, for a series of years, has been duly recognised.

One of the first acts of the English Government, consequent on the assumption of the administration of Bombay, was the institution of the Body Tax in 1668, at the rate of Rs. 6-1-33 reas per head—the difficult task of collecting which was unhesitatingly entrusted

to DORABJEE NANABHOY. The mode of levying this tax was that when a boy reached the age of thirteen years, he was taxed one rupee, when fourteen, two rupees, and a rupee was added annually, until he reached the age of eighteen, after which he became liable to the full rate of Rs. 6-1-33. Worn out men, and boys under thirteen were exempted from this taxation.

After faithfully serving the English for a long period of about 26 years, DORABJEE NANABHOY died in about 1688, leaving after him two sons, MANECKJEE and RUSTOMJEE, the latter of whom succeeded his father in his official functions.

RUSTOMJEE DORABJEE entered on his work with the same spirit and energy that characterised his father, and by his unremitting exertions soon convinced the Government that they had found in him as able and trustworthy a servant as his late father. His kind and affable disposition made him beloved by all, and on account of his intrepid fearlessness and marked gallantry he was long-remembered by the natives by the fond epithet of "RUSTOM GENDRAL." That RUSTOM was brave and fully deserved the *sobriquet* of the General, was fully well known to all of his acquaintance, but an important event, in 1692, soon made it a matter of public acknowledgment.

In that year Bombay was hard beset by the Seeddees of Junjeera, and had it not been for the loyal devotion and courage of RUSTOM DORAB, the island would have in all probability fallen into the hands of the desperate invaders, at least for a time. At that critical moment the Parsee official boldly came forward

to uphold the British flag, and, assisted by his personal influence among the natives he raised a militia and with great tact led them against the enemy, and succeeded in driving him away. Not only did he thus save the island, but, owing to the absence of the head of the English factory, he conducted the entire administration of the place for three clear days. The following extract from the *Deccan Herald* of 11th March 1863, will give an adequate conception of the interesting facts relating to this event :—

"He (Rustomjee Dorabjee) was the right-hand man of the Government in every department in those days connected with the jurisdiction of the island. The Seeddee,* who was at that time a powerful and independent neighbour, came with a large force and took possession of the island, together with Dungerry Fort (now called Fort George). He landed an army of twenty-five thousand men at Sewree without opposition, and in a few hours the Crescent waved from the summit of almost every eminence on the island. Although the Governor of Bombay had several vessels belonging to the Marine in the harbour which, in conjunction with the land forces of the company, might have successfully opposed the disembarkation of the Sciddee's army at Sewree, yet no orders were issued to them, and they had the mortification of being made passive spectators of their own defeat and humiliation. Redoubt after redoubt was captured, and fort after fort was taken, almost without the exchange of a shot, the European soldiers either falling back with precipitation, or joining the ranks of the conquering Moguls. The Sciddee marched into the village of Mazagon, where he established his head-quarters. In this village we had a fort mounting fourteen guns, which, to our shame be it spoken, was abandoned with such a degree of unseemly haste that its so-called defenders not only left behind them eight or ten chests of treasure, but their arms and ammunition. All the chief forts of the island, including those of

* The chiefs governing the island of Junjeera in the neighbourhood of Bombay, were called the "Seedees of Junjeera." At the time above alluded to, this island was under the dominion of Aurungzebe, the Mogul Emperor, and Yakut-Khan was its chief.

Worlee, Mahim and Sion, fell into the hands of the Sciddee without opposition; and, with the exception of the Castle, at present used as the grand arsenal of the Western Presidency, the whole of the Portuguese dowry was in the possession of the Chief of Junjeera. Captain Pean, with two companies of the Bombay Fusiliers, now Her Majesty's 103rd Royal Regiment of Foot, was then ordered out to drive back an army of 25,000 men in position! The attempt was heroically made; but soldiers cannot perform impossibilities; and Captain Pean, with his gallant band, had, in consequence, to seek the protection of the Castle batteries. Yakut Khan, the Sciddee, was a man of great bravery, and fully justified the confidence which his master Aurungzebe had reposed in him. Having secured all the strongholds of the island, he erected batteries on Doongaree Hill, within two hundred yards of the Fort walls. He was thus able to keep the garrison not only under his eyes, but under his guns, and was, moreover, in a position at any time to annoy them either with shot or shell.....The army of the Sciddee had been strongly reinforced, upwards of 40,000 of Aurungzebe's best-equipped soldiers having established themselves before the Fort walls. The Jesuits of Bandora kept the Sciddee well supplied with provisions, and, as he had free communication with the mainland, he was never at a loss for stores of any description. The Governor, who had placed the English in such a critical position, finding, when too late, that he lay almost at the mercy of the Sciddee, tried to bribe his officers; but the mean attempt proved abortive, and he had to undergo the humiliation of seeing his base offers spurned with the contempt which they so richly merited. He then sent envoys to Delhi to sue for peace; but, after being subjected to every indignity, they managed only to procure a new firman. The terms of the negotiation were also most degrading to the English character—so much-so, indeed, that, even at this distance of time, the blush of shame must suffuse the cheek of every high-minded Briton when he reads them. Sir John Child* was ordered to leave India immediately; a full recompense was to be made for every loss that had been sustained by the Mogul Government; and the officers of the Company, instead of being regarded as subjects, were for the future to be treated as slaves. The new arrangement was entered into in

* Sir John Child was the Governor of Bombay, from 1680 to 1690.

April 1690, but the Sciddee did not evacuate the island until the following June. Before quitting Bombay, he fired the fort of Mazagon, and his troops left behind them a pestilence which in a few months destroyed a greater number of men than had perished by the sword. This was the Company's first essay in the art of war, and the experiment, in addition to the humiliation and disgrace to which their servants were subjected, is said to have cost them nearly half a million of pounds sterling. The terrible lesson which had been taught them was not, however, thrown away; and from this period they resolved to strengthen the positions which belonged to them before attempting any further extension of their sovereignty.

The fortifications of Bombay were therefore repaired, and the defences of the island generally greatly strengthened. Rustom Dorab was called to aid the Government with his counsel; and, in 1692, when the plague broke out in the city, and when every European and all the garrison were more or less prostrate, he rose with the emergencies, took upon himself the charge of the government, and mustered and called out the militia, which was chiefly composed of the fishermen-class of Bombay. He fought with the Seeddee and his men, who had again invaded the place without orders from Delhi, drove them out of the island and retook the Dungerry Fort, despatched messengers to Surat to the chief of the English factory there with the news, and, on his arrival in Bombay, delivered into his hand the reins of government. For that service Rustom Dorab was honoured with the hereditary title of PATELL of Bombay, which means chief or lord, with a privilege that the whole of the fishermen of the island, who so bravely fought under him, were to be placed under his immediate control. He was to collect their taxes for the Government, and also decide all civil and religious disputes amongst them."

Another extract from a petition dated 25th July 1833 and presented by his grandson Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell to the then Governor, the Right Hon'ble John Earl of Clare, serves as a further documentary evidence bearing upon the subject :—

"Also when the Seeddees took possession of the whole of Bombay my ancestor Rustom Dorab Patell fought on the side of the English

and was actually for three days in charge of the Government of the island."

Besides this we append below the glowing account published, *apropos* of the visit of the Shah of Persia to England in 1873, in the August number of the "Oriental," a magazine conducted by the aged and veteran journalist Mr. J. H. Stockquelor, and devoted chiefly to the past and present of the East:—

"Going back some two hundred years, we find that when Bombay was ceded by the Portuguese to Charles II as part of the dower of the Infanta Caterina Braganza, there was a Parsee resident on the island, whose name was Dorabjee Nanabhoy. He had been very serviceable to the Portuguese in their intercourse with the natives. His tact in reconciling conflicting social elements and setting an example of loyalty to the people, recommended him to the English Government, to whom he subsequently endeared himself by the gallant resistance which his son Rustom offered to a piratical invasion by the Seedees. Rustom Dorab was, in recompense of his services appointed Patell or Chief of Bombay, and the title has been retained in the family to the present hour."

Some of the inhabitants of Bombay, leaving behind them their goods and chattels, had taken to flight at the very sight of the formidable invaders, and Rustom Dorab was consequently authorized by the Government to have the fourth of their property confiscated, and the rest returned to the owners on certain terms. Subjoined is one of the documents referring to this fact; it is dated 2nd October 1694, and bears the signatures of the Governor and his Councillors.

"Whereas Kinsojee Camaj.....Herba Seranjee did with many other Inhabitants of this Island of Bombay on the one and twentieth Instant, by a publick declaration in writing signed by him Confess and acknowledge the legall forfeiture of his Estate to

the Rt. Hon'ble English East India Company and by petition thereunto annexed did humbly crave mercy of the sd. Company Generall and the Councill. We the sd. Generall and Councill in behalfe of the said Company taking the promises into consideration do by virtue of the authority derived from them shew mercy and favoure to the poor inhabitant of the Island before unto Madojee Mancojee——his heirs and assignes his whole Estate with all Issues and profits thereunto belonging Provided nevertheless and upon the condition that he the said Madojee Mancojee shall and will pay or cause to be paid into the Treasury of the said Rt. Hon'ble Company one-fourth part of the Intrinsick value of his Estate at the days and times hereinafter limited and appointed for payment thereof that is to say one moyety or halfe part thereof on the one and twentieth day of December and the other moyety or halfe part on the one and twentieth day of March next ensueing the date hereof Which said whole Estate is to be valued and rated as followeth vizt. Every Coconutt tree at 5 Xeraphins and every Morah of Batty Ground at Xs. 200 and it is further ordered and condescended unto by us the said Generall and Councill that if the said Madojee Mancojee do submitt and comply with the reasonable fine for his great Neglect of his great duty in the defence of his owne and the Rt. Hon'ble Company's Estate on the Island when Invaded by the Siddy Yacoot Caune that then he shall freely and peaceably hold and enjoy the same for the future as fully and absolutely as he might have done if he had not forfeited the same aforesaid without any Claim or Molestation from the said Rt. Hon'ble Company But in default of payment of the said fourth part at the date and time before mentioned then these presents are to be absolutely void and of none effect and the said Rt. Hon'ble Company are to be in as full and actuall possession as they are or may be before the sealing hereof subject nevertheless to and always referring unto the said Rt. Hon'ble Company the part of your pension out of the said Estate which was agreed unto by the Hon'ble President Gerald Angier and the Inhabitants of the Island on the twelve day of November A. D. 1672 together with all Royaltys Rights and priviledges formerly belonging to the said Rt. Hon'ble Company as by the Articles of said Agreement may more at large appear and lastly it is agreed by the said Madojee Mancojee and he doth covenant and promise that he will within the space of 12 months next

ensueing plant new trees in all places in or upon his Oartas where there shall be a vacancy or conveniency found for planting of the same and for his owne proper use and benefitt In Witness whereof we the said Generall and Councill have affixed the Rt. Hon'ble Company's Seal and sett our hands this second day of October in the Sixth Year of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lord and Lady William and Mary by the Grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland King and Queen Defender of the Faith &c. A. D. One thousand six hundred and ninety-four."

Here follows a description of the property referred to above.

J. GAYER
G. WELDON
CALEB TRAVERS
RICHD. SPRIGGE
W. FORBES

It will be seen from the above that Rustom Dorab was entrusted with the headship over cooly fishermen, as also with the special authority to adjust civil or religious differences arising in the community ;* and

* As an illustration of the fact we subjoin the concluding paragraph of a petition presented to J. Little Esq. Magistrate of Mahim, by the coolies of that place, in the time of his (Rustom's) grandson Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell with respect to the difference that arose regarding their profession :—

"Wherefore your Petitioners humbly pray your Worship will be pleased, in issuing an order to the said coolies not to use the Ground in question, or refer the matter to the decision of Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell, who is the head over all the coolies in Bombay and Mahim district and is well aware with the mode of coolies' profession."

Minute by the Magistrate :—

This petition referred by mutual consent of the parties to the decision of Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell.

(Signed) J. LITTLE.
Actg. Pol. Magistrate.

Police Office Mahim
16th November 1830.

that at the same time the hereditary title of "Patell" was conferred upon him—a title, at that time of peculiar worth and importance. He was further invested with the right to claim a fish from every fish-laden boat that came out to Bombay, and for special reasons the nature of this right was hinted at by Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell in a letter addressed in 1836 to Mr. W. C. Bruce, Collector of Land Revenue.

"That ever since the Patellship was conferred upon my ancestors, we were in the habit of receiving as our legal right a fish from each boat coming laden with fish."

The collection of the "Body Tax" was among the responsible tasks that were transmitted from Dorabjee Nanabhoy to his son Rustom Dorab. Fort, Mazagon, Mahim, Worlēy, Dhārāvi, Sion, Sewree, Moree, Kelvi-Mahim, Vāndurkur, Vāndurkurbhoi, &c., were the places from which the revenue was collected, and it was for a period of about **165** Years that he and his descendants were successively honored with the confidence of the English Government on that score—at length in 1833 the functions were withdrawn from the then Patell Rustomjee Cowasjee, for reasons which will be learnt hereafter.

On behalf of the Government Rustom Dorab also received regular dues levied upon the parcels of salt batty ground yielding crops of rice. Without the payment of these dues no one was allowed to mow his crop as will be observed from the following official order issued by the Government in 1754 :—

Sir.

"Please to order to beat Battakey that no person shall mow the

crop of Salt Batty Ground of Malabar Breach without paying the Rent Due to the Hon. Company, and Oblige."

Sir.
Your most humble servant.
(Signed.) H. SYMMONS.

We also produce a letter requesting permission to mow the crops after due payment of rents. This was addressed in Guzratee by Mr. Manordass Rupjee, the ancestor of our well-known Hindoo citizens Sir Munguldass Nathoobhoy C.S.I. and Mr. Vurjivandass Madhowdass J. P.

"Patell Rustomjee Dorabjee, written by Sha Manordass Rupjee. The request for the present is that you will please permit the mowing of my crop,—Assoo Sud 14th."

The entries regarding the receipts of these dues can be traced in the account-books in our possession of as late a date as 1742, but we are not now in a position to lay our hands on those of previous years.

It was a licensed practice in those early times to press the carts and bullocks of the poor farmers and others into Government service whenever the government officials wanted them for the cultivation of the fields or for inland carriage of goods, but Rustom Patell's carts and bullocks were specially exempted from this absolute practice, as the following order will show:—

"I granted the Liberty to Rustom Patell for his own cart or Hanchry be not hindered nor employed the said cart upon any cart."

Besides what has already been taken note of, Rustom Dorab had also to supply ballast to vessels belonging

to the Hon'ble East India Company, as well as to private traders.

Apart from the satisfactory performance of his public duties, the abilities and tact of Rustom Dorab enabled him to command the full confidence of the Governors of the time. Two valuable credentials, written on parchment and bearing the sign manual of Governors Robert Cowan and John Horne, have been fortunately preserved, and they will give some idea of the position the brave and loyal Parsee held in their estimation.

"This is to certifie that Rustom Dorab has served me for upwards of seven years during which time he has behaved himself carefully, soberly, and faithfully as became a good servant for which reason I gave him the greatest share of my confidence and countenance and kept him always nearest to my Person. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand in Bombay the 20th January 1734-5."

(Signed.) ROBT. COWAN.

"This is to certifie that Rustom Dorab has served me faithfully for five years during which time he has behaved himself carefully, soberly, and faithfully as became a good servant. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand in Bombay this 12th September 1740."

(Signed.) JOHN HORNE.

On the 12th of April 1763 Rustom Dorab Patell died, after a glorious career of 71 years, and at a good old age of 96. He left four sons, Cowasjee, Dorabjee, Kaikhosru, and Tehmooljee, the eldest of whom represented his father in the Patellship as well as in the fulfilment of other public and private duties.

In his lifetime and for many years since an additional task of responsibility devolved upon Cowasjee and his descendants, which, notwithstanding the various risks and obstacles attendant thereon, was performed to the full satisfaction of all concerned. At that time it was extremely difficult to secure sufficient tonnage for the conveyance of troops from one place to another, and to avoid occasional inconvenience and annoyance the Government conferred upon Cowasjee Rustomjee Patell the management of transports whenever necessary. A contract was entered into, and Cowasjee met with no interruption in the execution of its terms. Among the vessels tendered for government service there was one "Shah Jehangir," 780 Tons, belonging to the Patell family.

On the capture of Tannah and Bassein in alliance with the Mahratta chief Ragunathrao Dadasahib the Hon'ble East India Company entrusted Cowasjee Patell with the local administration of their villages, viz. Churney-Bunder, Manpesur, Trombay, Math, Marvey, Manoree, Versovah, Dāndā, Bandora, Callian, Bhewndy, &c. In every village a Patell was elected and as an official distinction Cowasjee was called "Sir Patell" or the "Patell-in-Chief." His authority was so much acknowledged in those quarters that no one was allowed to go to or come from Bombay without obtaining his passport. A copy of which is transcribed below :—

To ANDREW RAMSAY, Esq.

Sir,

Please to permit to pass the bearer Heerjee Parsee going to Tanna.

I am Sir,

Bombay, 18th Feb. 1775. Your most obedt. humble Servt.

(Signed) Cowasjee Rustomjee Patell.

Cowasjee Patell was presented with a "Dress of honor" by Governor William Hornby, in about 1775. The *Deccan Herald* on whose columns we have already drawn attention has the following on this subject as well as on the assumption of the charge of the Tannah administration:—

"On the death of Rustom Dorab, his son Cawasjee Rustomjee was invested with a dress of honour by Governor Hornby, and became Patell in his own right. Since that time the family of Cawasjee Patell have continued to hold this office, with credit to themselves and to the satisfaction of the State. In time of war in India the Government have always found much difficulty in providing tonnage for transporting troops from one place to another. In the old time Cawasjee Patell was entrusted with the management of the department for providing all boats and tonnage for the public service, and at all times most honourably discharged his duty to the satisfaction of the British Government. The State then conferred upon him the contract for supplying all public tonnage, which has been held by, and renewed to, the family from time to time ever since; and for Eighty-five Years past the Patell family has had a contract from Government for the supply of boats and craft. When the British, in alliance with the late Rugoonath Rao Dada Sahib, took possession of Tanna and Bassian, the Government entrusted Cawasjee Patell with the charge of the place for several years; to which town (Tanna) he conveyed a colony of Parsees, and built all the religious places for them, such as fire-temples, towers of silence, &c., at an expense of more than a lakh of rupees from his own purse. He also did everything in his power to improve the place."

In the same way as Dorabjee Nanabhoy was the first Parsee who settled in Bombay and attracted to it several of his co-religionists, Cowasjee and his brother Dorabjee were the first among those who went over to Tannah, Bassein, and the adjacent towns, &c., where by their personal influence and hearty co-operation the two brothers succeeded in inducing a fair number of

Parsees to go and reside in those places. They had also a large share in reconciling the Hindoo and Mahomedan inhabitants of this newly acquired territory to the Government of the Hon'ble East India Company. The religious places alluded to in the above quotation, were established by Cowasjee and Dorabjee between the years 1775 and 1780.

To satisfy himself as to the way in which the administration of those villages was carried on, Governor William Hornby had started on an inspection tour in May 1782, inviting Cowasjee Patell to accompany him thither.

In Bombay Cowasjee Patell's name has been associated with a populated street in the Fort and a tank at Khetwady. "Cowasjee Patell Tank" at Khetwady was not only built by him at a very heavy outlay, but the periodical expenses attending the necessary repairs were borne by the Patell family up to the year 1834. It was eventually made over to the Government as will be seen from the following letters:—

To

The Right Hon'ble JOHN EARL OF CLARE,

President and Governor in Council.

MY LORD,

"Government having for many years past used the water of the Tank bearing the name of my Grandfather Cowasjee Patell to which the public have still longer had uninterrupted access. It is my wish as made known to Lieutenant-Colonel Dickenson more than a month ago that Government in the Public should in perpetuity enjoy the same unrestricted use of the water of the said Tank. The expense attending the necessary repairs for the due preservation

of which I humbly request and respectfully hope will be borne by Government."

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

22nd May 1834. Your Lordship's most obedient Servt.

(Signed) DADABHOY RUSTOMJEE PATELL.

No. 1215 of 1834.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT.

To
RUSTOMJEE COWASJEE PATELL,

"I am directed by the Right Honorable the Governor in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd Instant and to inform you that Government has ordered the immediate repair of Cowasjee Patell's Tank."

By order of the Right Honorable
the Governor in Council,

Bombay Castle,
24th May 1834.

(Signed) L. R. REID,
Secy. to Govt.

Over and above the responsible posts he held Cowasjee had to attend to his duty as a member of the Parsee Panchayet and of the Insurance Society the only one of its kind started in Bombay by some gentlemen connected with the Hon'ble East India Company.

Cowasjee left three sons—Sorabjee, Rustomjee, and Jehangir. The short but pithy note of his decease in an English Journal is sufficient to enable one to comprehend what was the true nature of the position he occupied during his lifetime.

"1799 August 6—Cowasjee Rustomjee Patell died at Bombay aged 57 years; he was of a most eminent and great rank of Bombay Parsees."

Cowasjee's successor in office was his brother Dorabjee Rustomjee Patell. Even many years before Cowasjee's death, Dorabjee had a share in his brother's troubles and anxieties both in his public and private capacity. He also carried on considerable business under the style of Dorabjee Rustomjee Patell & Co. He had formed valuable connections in Calcutta with Messrs. Colvins & Bazett for facilitating his transactions in Pegu, Rangoon, &c. Again with a view to enlarge the circle of his business he had thrice travelled to China, since the year 1793. His corresponding agent in China was the well-known Borah merchant Sumsoodeen Abdool Rajak.

When Dorabjee Patell was residing at Bassein for the purpose of supervising the Government revenue on behalf of his brother, the Maharattas were the unfailing objects of terror in and about the place. Formidable bands of these lawless freebooters occasionally poured in from their native abodes, looted the ryot's property and destroyed men's lives without the slightest regard. It essentially belongs to the province of history to treat fully and with effect of the dark inhuman deeds of these detestable Pindharee hordes. We mention this circumstance simply with respect to Dorabjee Patell, who regularly performed his duties in those unsafe parts at the risk of his life which was at one time very nearly sacrificed, when a band of Maharattas made their way towards Dorabjee's residence, killed a sepoy on duty, and carried away his karbhari Sorabjee Colah; Dorabjee himself fortunately escaped unhurt.

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The heavy responsibilities associated with the Boat Contract entered into with the government by his brother Cowasjee as referred to in the foregoing pages, induced Dorabjee to make certain arrangements with the principal Shipowners, such as Hormusjee Bomanjee Wadia, Framjee Manockjee Wadia, Javerchund Atmaram, Madhavadas Ranchodedass, & others, which were ultimately brought about on the 25th of November 1800. At the same time that they imposed upon the shipowners the obligation of providing on a fixed remuneration any number of vessels whenever required, they called upon the other party to procure a guarantee from the Hon. East India Company, ensuring compensation for any damages their vessels when in actual service might suffer in consequence of the Napoleanic wars that raged so furiously at the time.

In 1801, however,the Boat Contract was suddenly advertised and tenders invited for it, whereupon an elaborate petition was lodged by Dorabjee with the Hon. Jonathan Duncan, a few extracts from which are quoted below. The official reply to that petition is missing but it appears from the various entries in the account-books, that the Patell got the business back as he desired.

Extracts from a petition dated September 1801, *by Dorabjee Rustomjee Patell, to the Hon'ble Jonathan Duncan, President and Governor in Council:—*

"That for a long series of years past the work of this harbour as far as regarded the employment of small country-boats has been conducted through the medium of my family.

That from the influence thus required and possessed by my ancestors in the boat line it has been found expedient for these last thirty years to resort to them also in the procural of larger vessels,

such as pattamars, Batellas, &c. for Government service, either in the marine or military departments.

That the service has, I believe been invariably performed to the satisfaction of Government and the different Departments respectively.

That to enable us to meet the probable requisitions of Government increasing from year to year, in proportion to the growing consequence of the Presidency and Port, it has been found necessary for my family to keep at their own expence, a considerable permanent establishment of servants of different description to superintend and conduct the various duties of equipping the boats or vessels when wanted, or to notice the state of such vessels at all times so as to know, what, on Emergencies, are most suited for the service on foot. Also to have at the Northern Settlements Agents and Correspondents to give the necessary intelligence of boats at, or expected at those places.

That the connexions and influence thus established have enabled us to meet emergent requisitions for boats to an extent that could only result from long continued employment; while the respectability attached to the Public opinion of possessing a sort of hereditary claim to the patronage of Government gave confidence to our exertions that cannot exist under precarious and temporary calls.

The great wealth of this place naturally inclines adventurous people to seek new modes of employing it, and some people envious of the prosperity of others, derived from the favor of Government are tempted even to a certainty of immediate loss to endeavour at participation—while this is allowed to extend no farther than harmless emulation, great public good is doubtless derived therefrom, but where it tend, as in the present instance, to contract an influence frequently exerted to beneficial public end, the innovation, I respectfully submit, is more likely to be attended with public mischief than with public good.

Unwilling to trespass on the valuable time of your Hon'ble Board, I forbear to dwell on the unwearied exertions of our family on any important service—we think little of remaining, literally, night and day, on the spot of duty; or of employing our capital when necessary, as it often is, on the public service—even when no emolument can possibly arise therefrom—I therefore on the part of myself and family respectfully entreat a continuance of your patronage so long as we continue to deserve it....."

Dorabjee Patell's services were further utilised by the government, when he was employed as the carrying agent of cotton (belonging to the Hon. East India Company) from Surat, Jumboosar, and other districts to Bombay, as well as of large quantities of government timber from the Malabar Coast, for the express purpose of building or repairing vessels of war or of trade. The contract for supplying all the requirements of the Gunpowder Factory at Mazagon was next offered to Dorabjee, and this he undertook in conjunction with the late Cursetjee Maneckjee Shroff.

On the 13th of August 1804 Dorabjee Patell died at the age of fifty, leaving after him a son, named Hormusjee, four years old. With regard to his death the *Bombay Courier* of the 18th August 1804 had the following obituary note:—

"Death—Last Sunday night Dorabjee Rustomjee Patell, a respectable Parsee inhabitant of this place."

It is said that after Dorabjee's death some respectable Parsees applied to Governor Jonathan Duncan for the acquisition of the Patellship and the various functions connected therewith, insinuating at the same time that there was nobody then left in the Patell family worthy to hold the responsible post. Thereupon the late Pestonjee Bomanjee Wadia, a merchant of high rank and a hearty friend of the late brothers Cowasjee and Dorabjee presented to the Governor the three sons of Cowasjee,—Sorabjee, Rustomjee, and Jehangir —with Hormusjee the infant son of Dorabjee, and urged the justness of their claims upon what they were so deliberately threatened to be deprived of. The Governor readily admitted the justice of Pestonjee's re-

presentations, and in proof of his earnestness presented a shawl to each of the three sons of Cowasjee, and a small shawl-handkerchief to the infant representative of Dorabjee. The Patellship with its various adjuncts was soon after bestowed upon Sorabjee, the eldest of Cowasjee's sons.

Thus though the little incident above referred to threatened for a while to ruffle the harmony of relations so long subsisting between the Government and the Patell family, the judicious policy of the Governor and the consequent nomination of Sorabjee as the successor of Dorabjee, disappointed those who secretly indulged in crafty machinations.

In 1816 Sorabjee Patell received an official letter from Mr. J. D. Devitre, the Collector of Bombay, accepting his tender for farming the Worlee Fishery for 700 Rupees per year.

In the preceding pages we have noted that ever since 1801 the authorities established—though nominally and without any obvious reasons the principle of inviting tenders for the Boat Contract to which the Patell family had by this time acquired almost an hereditary right. But when in 1820 Sorabjee Patell saw that the space of three years was at once going to be cutdown to one, he addressed a letter on the 5th of May to Mr. Henry Meriton, the President of the Marine Board, deprecating the system as injurious to the interests of his family, as well as detrimental to the efficient working of the task imposed upon him, and at the same time requesting the President to recommend the Government to allow the contract to

run over a period of nine years. The following was the reply received in due course :—

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

To

SORABJEE COWASJEE PATELL,

SIR,

"I am directed by the Marine Board, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated this day, requesting that your contract for the supply of Bátella tonnage (under consideration) may be renewed, for a longer period, than three years; and to acquaint you, that the Board have been pleased to recommend to Government, the acceptance of your proposal, dated the 19th Ultimo, for renewing your expiring contracts, for the supply of Batella tonnage, to the Military and Marine departments, for a further period of three years, on the same terms, and conditions, but the Board, decline to recommend any contract for a longer term, than that, above specified.

The Board in resolving to recommend the renewal of your existing contracts, for a further period of three years, on the same terms, and conditions; were influenced materially by the expectation they entertain, that the same diligence and promptitude, that has been evinced in your discharge of the present, and former Engagements, in meeting the calls of the Public service, for tonnage, will continue to be manifested, in the performance of the further Engagements, now recommended to Government."

I am, Sir

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) W. MORGAIN,

Secy: Marine Board.

Bombay,
Marine Board Office,
5th May 1820.

How carefully and faithfully the engagements of this Boat Contract were carried out through a series of years, will be learnt from the undermentioned certificates earned by Sorabjee at different times from the Quarter Master General, the Commissary General, and the Superintendent of Marine :—

To

SORABJEE PATELL,

&c. &c.

SIR,

"As you wish me to bear Testimony to the manner in which you have conducted yourself as contractor for the supply of Boats during the last three years, whilst I have been Quarter Master General to the Army, I have no objection to meet your wishes, for the information of the Public and your Friends, and can confidently assert, that your Duties in this branch of the Service, have been performed with the greatest promptitude and attention, and at all Times to my satisfaction.

I sincerely hope the contract will be continued to you, and to enable you to execute the same with more satisfaction to yourself and on more reasonable terms to the Public that the Period of Enjoyment may be extended to three or five years; the advantage of which will be reciprocal."

I am Sir,

Bombay, October 22nd 1820.

Your most obedient Servant,
(Signed) ROBT. LEWIS,
Qr. Master General to the army.

No. 1138 of 1823.

SORABJEE COWASJEE PATELL,

Boat Contractor.

"I have received your letter of the 6th Instant, for my opinion of your conduct during the time you have performed the Duties of Boat Contractor under me. I have no complaint whatever against you, nor have I heard of any from any officers of your not complying on all occasions with the orders you receive on account of passages or other conveyances furnished by you."

Bombay, Com. Genl's Office 10th December 1823.

I am your obt. Servant.
(Signed) J. BAKER.
Commissary General.

"This is to certify that Sorabjee Cowasjee and after his demise his brother Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell, the contractor for the supply of tonnage in the Military and Marine Department, has from 1813 to

Novr. 1825 invariably performed his services with promptitude, zeal, and activity, and never given the least cause to be displeased, or to find fault with him, in the execution of his duties, and as such I have no hesitation whatever to declare that he is an active and trustworthy man."

Bombay, 14th Nov. 1825. } (Signed) HENRY MERITON, Superintendent.

On the 4th of September 1825 Sorabjee Patell died, leaving after him his sons, Cowasjee and Dorabjee. His death was noticed by an English paper as follows:—

"Sept. 4th 1825. Sorabjee Cowasjee Patell died at Bombay aged 62 years, a member of a Parsee family of eminence, Rustomjee Cowasjee and Jehangir Cowasjee of Bombay having all been men of the greatest probity, rank, and distinction."

After him came his younger brother Rustomjee. It should be noted here that the good fortune of the Patell family had played its part, and was now completely exhausted; the advent of Rustomjee was, almost a prelude to the loss of the valuable public concerns which this ancient Parsee family had so long managed. Among these the chief were (1) the collection of the revenue of Salt Batty Ground and the Body Tax; and (2) the Boat Contract.

(1) **The Revenue Collection:**—The Balance of the revenue having been left unpaid for two or three consecutive years, for reasons stated in the following Petition, the Collector of Bombay vigorously pressed Rustomjee for payment, and before the latter could arrange to meet the deficiency, he was absolutely suspended from his post in 1830. On the sixth of July of the same year Rustomjee Patell applied to Sir John Malcolm, the Governor of Bombay, for the resumption

of his duties, and reminding him of the services rendered by his predecessors to the British Government, dwelt at some length upon the manner in which the collections were made, and the various obstacles and stumbling blocks they had to encounter in the performance of that difficult task. To do justice to the Patell the true cause of the difficulty above alluded to, can be gathered from the following petition :—

To

The Hon'ble SIR JOHN MALCOLM, G. C. B.

President and Governor in Council.

HONORABLE SIR,

"I beg leave most respectfully to request you will draw the attention of your Hon'ble Board to an inconvenience which I feel as the Collector of the Body Tax from the fishermen Coolies, in the districts of Bombay and Mahim, and I trust you will excuse my explaining to you the origin and the incidents connected with the levying of this Tax as well as the inconvenience I have to complain of in the Transfer of the Tax over to the Collector of Customs at this Presidency.

This Tax originated about a century and a half ago, when these districts chiefly inhabited by Coolies contained a small population compared with their present, and the Government of that day was pleased to appoint my ancestors Patell and to grant them this collection of the Tax as a reward for services done to the Hon'ble Company, and the descendants of the family have from thence to the present period uninterruptedly continued Patellship of the caste and the Collector of the Tax.

The Tax is an annual Tax falling due on the 9th of October in every year when the persons assessed to it are constantly engaged on Board of vessels fitting out for sea, at the Break up of the Rains when they proceed to sea and do not generally quit their vessels until the end of July in the following year, so that it is only during the month of August and September that an opportunity offers of collecting this Tax for the preceding year as in the succeeding

month of October, when another year falls due, the vessels are again out fitting on their annual voyages.

The majority of the persons assessed to the Tax are so poor as to be nearly destitute of the common necessaries of life and totally unable from want of means to meet the payment of the Tax at once, so that the only mode in which, I can collect it, is by degrees in the best manner I am able, nevertheless the officer of Government regularly demand the payment from me shortly after it has fallen due before even an opportunity has been afforded me of beginning to make the collection. But as I have always been anxious for the sake of my own character and for the honor of my ancestors name to meet demands of the Government. The arrears of Tax have hitherto been paid up chiefly out of my own pocket, and at some personal loss, and none of the predecessors of the present Collector of Land-Revenue have ever found it requisite to make complaint of any default on the part of me or of my ancesstor's, in accounting for this Tax, on the conviction that it was always paid as on circumstances allowed.

At the time Mr. B. Doveton the present Collector took his seat in the Customs the arrears amounted to Rupees 11655-2-26 reas, payment of which he demanded and although I have not yet had the opportunity of collecting these arrears, and though there are now outstanding Bills owing to me amounting to 12,000 twelve thousand Rupees, which I shall be happy to lay before the Hon'ble Board for their satisfaction (if required) an Instalment of Rupees 3,000 was paid by me in part discharge of the arrears on the 6th of March last, a second Instalment of Rupees 4,000 on the 9th of June last, and a third Instalment of Rupees 1,700 on the 1st of July, and there remains only a Balance due to the Government of Rupees 2,055-2-26 which I have promised to pay when an opportunity will be given me to collect the Tax; however the claims of the Collector are still so pressing that he has refused to give me more than 15 days or a month and I am informed that he has reported the default to your Hon'ble Board, which I consider has so reflected upon my character that if I could have satisfied myself he would have taken such step I should rather have paid the Balance out of my own pocket, than have given him the chance of reporting it to your Hon'ble Board.

The object therefore of this humble appeal to your Hon'ble Board now is, that the present arrears, which I will pay now

but hope your Hon'ble Board will be pleased to signify to the Collector your wishes, that in future years the payment of the whole of this Tax to the Government may be suspended until the month of October following that on which the Tax falls due, when an opportunity will have been afforded me of making a part of the collection from the persons assessed ; but when the whole amount of the Tax shall be punctually paid up and the remaining part of the collection I shall recover as usual."

I have the honer to be

Bombay, 6th July 1830.

Hon'ble Sir,
Your most humble obedient and faithful Servant.

(Signed) RUSTOMJEE COWASJEE PATELL.

In reply to this Patell Rustomjee was reinstated in his official capacity. He was however again removed by the same Collector Mr. Doveton owing to the non-payment of Rs. 9235-0-68 on account of the revenues of 1831/1832. Rustomjee had again to appeal to the new Governor the Right Hon'ble John Earl of Clare, who, however, took no notice of his petitions dated 22nd April and 25th July 1833, the following extracts from which are rather important :—

"That your Petitioner from the time of his ancestor's, is holding under the Collector of Land Revenue at Bombay, from the time of the British Flag being first hoisted over this Island, in consideration of his ancestor's services then rendered to this Government of which I shall only mention that when the Hon'ble Company in alliance with the late Rugoonath Rao Dada Sahib took possession of Tannah and Bassein the Government entrusted my ancestor Cowasjee Patell with the important charge of those districts and the Patell of that time assisted the expeditions against those places, also, when the Seedees took possession of the whole of Bombay my ancestor Rustom Dorab Patell fought on the side of the English and was actually for *Three Days* in charge of the Government of the Island, and assisted in driving the Seedee from his possession on Dungery Hill (now Fort George). The collection of Revenue derived from the Coolery

or Fishery of Bombay and that in consequence of our holding such office, our family from the remotest time were honored with the surname or title of "Patell."

The difficulty of collecting such an amount from the numerous body of Fishermen must be apparent to your Hon'ble Board and owing to the bodily infirmity of myself who am the present head of the Patell Family and my trusting too much to others the payment of the Revenue in question was unfortunately allowed to fall in arrears owing to which circumstances the Collector of Land Revenue has suspended my family from the office we have so long enjoyed.

.....we do therefore trust under all these circumstances the Government will not allow one of the most ancient families in Bombay to be totally ruined and degraded by being deprived of an office and title which they have held for so many years. The system of Government both in England and here is rather to support the respectability of old Families and to increase the number of them than to reduce them."

In July 1834 a third petition was drawn up, which, besides offering some necessary explanations humbly directed the attention of the Government to the harm the unpleasant circumstance was likely to do to the interests of his family, and requested for a decent pension in consideration thereof. We cannot here resist the temptation of quoting a paragraph from this petition, which throws some light on the subject.

"The duties of which situation (*i. e.* of the Collector of the Body Tax) from the time of your Petitioner's ancestors up to this time, your Petitioner and his ancestors have performed to the utmost satisfaction of their Superiors, and they have made good annually to Government their collections from their own purse, and have suffered great losses in bad Debts, and a large sum of outstanding Balances, and in establishment amounting annually to 1,200 Rupees, which your Petitioner has no hopes of ever recovering from a class so wretchedly poor as the fisherman of Bombay and Mahim Districts, and through owing to this your Petitioner and his ancestors have during a period of 165 Years, embarked the whole of their

fortune, for the honor and respectability of themselves, and their family, they never have claimed any remuneration whatever from Government, to your Petitioner's deep sorrow and regret however he was so unfortunate to be deprived of the situation, which he and his ancestors held for so many years under this Government."

This petition was submitted for consideration to the Governor General Lord William Bentinck and his Council, but by an official reply through the Bombay Government on the 15th of January 1835, it transpired that Rustomjee had nothing to hope for from that quarter.

Rustomjee did not give up the matter entirely in despair. In 1837 he resumed his efforts at regaining his lost Patellship by again applying to the Governor as also to Mr. Doveton's successor Mr. Bruce. Rustomjee's request was ultimately granted, but only on the condition of his tendering securities for the regular payments of the dues. Till his death in 1843 this particular function remained with the Patell family, but in 1844 it was finally taken up by the Government.

(2). **The Boat Contract**:—There were two divisions of the Boat Contract; one under the direction of the Military Board, and the other under that of the Marine Board. The former, which was managed through the Commissariate, required tonnage for the conveyance of Troops and Army-supplies; the latter called upon the contractor to furnish boats, pattamars, &c. for the importation of planks, cotton, coals, and other articles, belonging to the East India Company.

On the first of August 1832 Rustomjee Patell applied for the continuance of the term for the Military Boat Contract, which was drawing to a close on the

31st of the same month, but was informed in reply by the Government Secretary Mr. Reid, that the extension of time was only granted till the 30th of November, after which date it was to be considered who was to be entrusted with that business. Rustomjee consequently made a petition again on the 17th of October, in reply to which he was informed on the 5th of November that the Commissary General was instructed to allow the contract to be in force until the close of the fair season.

About a month after the receipt of the reply above referred to, that is to say on the 6th of December, Rustomjee Patell had again to hear from the Governor in Council that "having decided on inviting tenders for the Boat Contract the public interests must alone be considered in deciding on the tender which should be accepted." Against this threatening message Rustomjee applied once more to the Right Hon'ble John Earl of Clare indicating his willingness at the same time to take up the contract even at something less; and accordingly on the 15th of July 1833 he submitted a tender in the name of his son, at a reduction of about 20 per cent, in the original scale of charges.

On the 12th of October 1833 the Deputy Commissary General wrote to Rustomjee to say "that you will furnish me in course of the day, with a list of the Boats which you possess, being *bona fide* your own property, exhibiting the description, appellation and burthen of each, and shewing also in whose office they are Registered." And agreeably to this instruction the following list of Boats was made out and forwar-

ded along with a letter to Captain J. Reynolds, the Acting Deputy Commissary General on the 14th idem.

List of Boats belonging to Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell, Boat Contractor :—

Description of Boats.	Tonnage. Ton	or Cds.	Where Registered.
Batella Guneshpursad	183	732	Registered in the Superintendent's Office under No. 651
Pattymar Ramban	97	388	„ „ „ 2074
Ketch Vigilent	41	164	„ „ „ 3153
Batella Mooradbux	77¼	309	„ „ „ 3154
Pattymar Kaikhusroe.....	22¼	89	„ „ „ 3155
Batella Perozbux	79	316	„ „ „ 3218
			This Boat is registered in the name of my cousin Hormusjee Dorabjee Patell.
Luggage Boat Buffalo	88	352	These Boats are not in custom to be registered.
„ „ Bombay	50	200	
„ „ Content	50	200	
6 Bunder Boats.....			
7 Bamboats,.....			
27 Cotton Boats.....			

With the exception of the above the Patell family had a ship called "Edmonstone" 460 Tons. In February 1829, when Government had called upon Rustomjee to supply boats for the conveyance of the detachment of H. M. 40th Regiment to Vingorla, and when at that time no crafts were procurable, he had brought this vessel into service, regardless of the heavy loss he sustained thereby—simply with a view to maintain his reputation, and to convince the Government of his devoted zeal in their service. This fact was referred to in the letter to the Acting Deputy Commissary General above alluded to.

The "Edmonstone" was valued at Rs. 75,000, and the above boats at Rs. 80,000, which shows that the Patell family had to invest a large sum of money in the management of the Boat Contract.

In spite of all this trouble the contract was at length taken off the hands of Rustomjee Patell, and given over to one of his servants at extremely low prices.

Deprived though Rustomjee was of this important function it was not at all owing to any want of efficiency of management as will be seen from the following certificates :—

To

RUSTOMJEE PATELL,

SIR,

"In reply to your reference as to my opinion of your conduct during the time I have had charge of this Department, it gives me much pleasure to bear testimony to the promptitude and attention which you have always shown in providing tonnage for the Public Service, which has been never impeded by any delay on your part, though circumstances have often led to your subsequently being a sufferer, from the absence of vouchers &c. which it was too late to procure. I take my leave of you with best wishes for your continuing to enjoy to merit the Public confidence which has been evinced towards your family, by the length of time it has held the Boat Contract."

Bombay, 14th January 1827.

Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) J. W. SHULDHAM,
Quarter Master General.

RUSTOMJEE COWASJEE PATELL
Boat Contractor

SIR,

"I have perused the above letter, and I fully subscribe to it, being satisfied that you conducted the duties entrusted to you, by the Boat Contract, with zeal and ability. You have always afforded me great satisfaction, and I hope you will long enjoy, and be conti-

nied in the situation, of which I consider to you to be most deserving, and entitled to every consideration and support."

Bombay, Commissary General's Office 30th August 1828.

Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) E. W. BELLASIS,
Commissary General.

COWASJEE PATELL.

"Your long services in the Department are too well known to require any certificate from me, and what you have received from former Com. General will be quite sufficient to insure you every consideration from Government on the expiration of your present contract. As far as I am concerned I hope you may succeed in obtaining a renewal of it, as long experience must have made you more acquainted with the duty than any other Person can be expected to be, and with all good wishes for your success."

I remain your's obediently,

20th March 1832

(Signed) H. HOLLAND,
Commissary General.

Bombay 22nd January 1834.

"I have much pleasure in adding my testimony to those of my Predecessors at the Quarter Master General's office, in favour of the Boat Contractor Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell, who has ever proved himself a very efficient Agent to Government, and for whose general respectability of character and kind liberal disposition I entertain great regard and esteem."

(Signed) E. HARDY.

The history of the Contract under the supervision of the Marine Board, is not so diversified as that of the contract under the direction of the Military Board. It was carried on by Rustomjee Patell smoothly and uninterruptedly for a very long time till 1832 when he transferred it to his son Dadabhoy. But in 1840 it was voluntarily given up owing to very stringent terms on the side of the Government, which precluded the business from being carried on without pecuniary loss; and

it was with some reluctance that the management of this concern was made over to other hands.

In 1837 Rustomjee Patell took up a contract, in the name of his son, for the supply of water to the vessels of the Hon. East India Company as well as to those of private merchants, at a fixed rate of charges.

Some of the Masters of the vessels occasionally used to escape by sailing away surreptitiously. Such practising upon the Patell's purse, led to an enactment of a rule empowering the Paymaster to withold the granting of the usual Port-clearance to any vessel that failed to produce a satisfactory proof of the payment of the dues to Dadabhoy Patell. Subjoined is the official letter addressed to Dadabhoy on the subject :—

MARINE DEPARTMENT No. 188,
Bombay Castle, 13th March 1838

SIR,

"I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 26th ultimo, and to acquaint you that the Paymaster at the Presidency has been instructed not to grant his certificate required by commanders of vessels to enable them to obtain their Port Clearance without first ascertaining from you that there is no demand against the ship on account of water supplied or that due security has been afforded for the payment of all such charges."

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed) JOHN WOOD.
Lieut : Col. Secretary to Govt.

To
DADABHOY RUSTOMJEE COWASJEE PATELL.

Amongst the privileges that the Patell family enjoyed was of being supplied with medicine at the expense of the Government as appears from the following correspondence.

"The medical storekeeper presents his compliments to Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell and will thank him to state what office he holds under Government entitling him to Medicines from the Government Dispensaries."

Medical Storekeeper's Office
25th September 1838.

(Signed) C. KANE,
Medical Storekeeper.

To
The MEDICAL STOREKEEPER,

SIR,

"I have received your note of the 25th Inst. I beg leave to state you that I have held the affairs of the head Patell over all the Coolies, in the Bombay and Mahim districts, which affairs having descended down in my family these about one hundred and fifty years and upwards past, also being receiver of the Body Tax, and Foras of the Salt Batty Ground, all the affairs in question bordering to the Collector's Department."

Bombay,
26th September 1838

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
(Signed) RUSTOMJEE COWASJEE PATELL.

The facilities offered by the Fire Temple and the Tower of Silence established by his ancestors at Tannah having by this time, become unequal to the increased wants of the Parsee community of that place, Rustomjee rebuilt the former in 1829 and erected a new Tower of Silence in 1843. On the eleventh day after the consecration of this Tower of Silence, that is to say on the 27th of April Rustomjee Patell departed this life at the age of 65 leaving behind him three sons—Heerjibhoy, Dadabhoy, and Kharshedjee—and a large family to bemoan his loss. His death was thus chronicled by one of the English papers :—

"1843 April 27. Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell died at Bombay aged 60 years; this gentleman was one of the most enlightened, liberal minded, upright, and honourable merchants in Western

India of whom it isintimated that in the course of time had given about £5000 in charity."

Rustomjee Patell was succeeded by his second son Dadabhoy, whose elder brother Heerjibhoy had gone over to China, on a commercial enterprise long before the death of his father. In August 1834 Heerjibhoy went on a visit to Macao, from which place he returned on the 28th of February 1842, but repaired there again in the following September. He conducted his business as a merchant in China on a grand scale, corresponding with various firms among whom may be mentioned Lyal Matheson & Co. of Calcutta, G. Zachariah & Co. of Singapore, Fletcher Larkin & Co., and afterwards Innes Fletcher & Co. of Macao. On the 6th of March 1856 Heerjibhoy left Macáo for England, where he stays even at this present moment.

The management of the Water Contract which was entrusted to Dadabhoy by his father even in his lifetime was continued by him till 1855. The efficient management of the Water Contract during a long period of 18 years was duly appreciated by Commodore Sir Henry J. Leeke, who wrote as follows :—

No. 2616 of 1855.

COMMODORE'S OFFICE,
Bombay, 10th September 1855.

SIR,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 6th Instant, relative to your having transferred the Government Water Boats and their stores to the Master Attendant and offering your services should they again be required by Government.

While thanking you for the prompt manner in which you have offered your services, I likewise avail of the opportunity to express my satisfaction at the way in which you have always conducted the duties of the Water Contract during the time I have been at the Head of the Naval Department, and the more particularly so during

the time of the draught of last year, when your exertions were of very great benefit to the service, as well as to the inhabitants of the Island."

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
(Signed) HENRY J. LEEKE,
Commander-in-Chief, I. N

To
DADABHOY RUSTOMJEE COWASJEE PATELL.

Besides this in 1853 Captain Lynch, the Master Attendant, had given Dadabhoy Patell, the following certificate :—

I have much pleasure in certifying to the character of Dadabhoy Rustomjee Cowasjee Patell, the Government Water Contractor, whom I have known for a long period during which I held the offices of the Assistant Superintendent I. N., officiating Superintendent, and Master Attendant, and from my personal knowledge of his duties, I have no hesitation to say that he discharged them to my entire satisfaction, particularly during the scarcity of water which prevailed in Bombay his services in procuring it from the neighbouring coast were most meritorious.

Bombay, October 13th 1853. (Signed) W. LYNCH
Captain I. N.

Dadabhoy Patell died on the 4th of April 1869. In his time the connection with the Government entirely ceased to exist, and great loss was entailed upon the family. The *Deccan Herald* of the 11th of March 1863, from which we have given some extracts before, thus delineates the closing scene :—

"It will from this be perceived that the family, in one way or another, have served the British Government, from the time of their taking possession of the Island of Bombay, to the present day, with unstained honor and an unspotted character. They have suffered great losses themselves, at times, in their contracts and collections, but they cheerfully submitted to them, for the honor of their names

and the credit of the family. Even up to this time, the Patell family have been but poorly recompensed, for all the services which they have at various times rendered the paramount power. The Patell family is no mushroom production of yesterday. Its members were influential men when landed on these shores; and we can only hope that government will ever bear in remembrance the great services which have from time to time been rendered us, when overtaken by emergencies. There is an old adage which says that a friend in need is a friend indeed, and as we have ever found the Patells ready when required it is to be hoped that when good services are to be recompensed, that theirs will not be forgotten."

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